

Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Approved 2/27/03

Town of Los Altos Hills PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 9, 2003, 7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 26379 Fremont Road
cc: Cassettes (1) #01-03

1. ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Planning Commission regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

Present: Chairman Vitu, Commissioners Clow, Cottrell, Kerns & Wong

Staff: Carl Cahill, Planning Director; Debbie Pedro, Assistant Planner; Angelica Herrera, Assistant Planner; Lani Smith, Planning Secretary

2. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR-none

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 3.1 LANDS OF KORMAN, 26157 Altadena Drive (203-02-LLA); A request for a Site Development Permit for a lot line adjustment.

This item was continued to January 9, 2003 at the request of the applicant. It has been continued to a date uncertain. The project will be re-noticed at a later date.

- 3.2 LANDS OF HUANG, 24905 La Loma Court (243-01-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a basement expansion, and a landscape/hardscape plan.

Staff (Debbie Pedro) introduced this item by providing an overview of the project and the Town initiated arborist report with recommendations which have been incorporated into the conditions of approval (#4). She pointed out that there is a 48" oak tree located on the north corner of the property. The planting plans show plantings under this tree. Because oak trees do best with little or no plantings directly under the canopy, staff recommends a condition of approval be added to require minimal or no plantings occurs under that oak tree. Regarding the sunken patio, the applicant has proposed to excavate a circular area approximately 40 feet in diameter to the north of the house. The terrace garden design features planters and waterfalls surrounding a lower patio area which is 10 feet below natural grade. She further discussed the Town's grading policy, recommending approval of the proposed sunken patio based on the findings that activities occurring in this area will be below ground level and will have minimal noise or visual impact to the adjacent neighbors.

OPENED PUBLIC HEARING

Ken Pastrof, The Owen Companies, 445 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos, project representative, concurred with the staff report and the added condition of approval regarding plantings under the oak tree canopy. The landscape architect was available for questions.

Commissioner Kerns asked why they added the driveway area in the front instead of asking for it originally with the new residence. Mr. Pastrof responded stating this was a contract house and as the owners saw the project developed, they did not want to back down a slope (safety). They negotiated an easement with the adjacent neighbor so they could exit across his property at the very bottom where it joins the cul-de-sac right of way.

OPENED PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Wong felt it was a clear application with minimum impact with the 10 foot cut. Commissioner Cottrell had no objections but he would be opposed to any future variance requests since they are using all of their available development area numbers. Commissioner Kerns' only concern was with the large oak tree in the front of the house. He would like to see the driveway design modified to save the tree or to plant another tree on the left side to help screen the house. Commissioner Clow supports staff's recommendations. Chairman Vitu also supports the project.

MOTION SECONDED AND PASSED: Motion by Commissioner Clow and seconded by Commissioner Wong to approve the request for a Site Development Permit for a basement expansion, and a landscape/hardscape plan, Lands of Huang, 24905 La Loma Court, with the following additions/changes to the conditions of approval: (1) the two heritage oak trees proposed for removal shall be replaced with two 48" box oaks to be planted on the front of the property; and (2) there shall be no planting or hardscape under the canopy of the existing 48" oak tree at the north corner of the property.

AYES: Chairman Vitu, Commissioners Kerns, Cottrell, Wong & Clow
NOES: None

This item is subject to a 23 day appeal period.

3.3 LANDS OF AU, 12870 Robleda Road (239-02-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a landscape screening plan.

Staff (Angelica Herrera) introduced this item by reviewing the landscape screening plan with the modification to condition #5 placed on the approval for the new residence. She referred to Code Section 10-2.805 and Attachment #2 from the applicant's landscape architect which outlines the obstacles to installing fully grown mature trees at the 400 and 410-foot contours. A letter from a neighbor across from the project site indicated she had reviewed the proposed landscape plan and had no particular concerns with it. The second part of condition #5 relates to plantings on the

east side of the home approximately 12 feet in height and which upon maturity reach a height less than 20 feet... Attachment #3 provided photos of the site taken today. She was not sure they were to address the 20 foot height at maturity unless they agreed to have the trees trimmed or topped at that height or they may agree to substitute with a shrub that would grow to a maximum height of 20 feet.

Commissioner Clow asked if there was any history of applicants planting 35 foot trees. The Planning Director responded that there was a history in town to plant full size, very large trees for immediate screening. Sometimes a condition is added and later they find that it is not feasible to install.

OPENED PUBLIC HEARING

Dean Au, 707 Kao Court, Sunnyvale, applicant, discussed the original request for screening trees. There were only concerns from two neighbors across the hill. One neighbor wrote a letter stating no concerns. The problem with the original request for large trees is getting them to the site and the difficulty and high cost to install them. He referred to a letter from his landscape architect regarding this matter. In a spirit of cooperation, he proposed to install a variety of 24" box size trees that will grow to 25-30 feet tall. These are considered specimen size trees, and are considerably larger than the normal 15 gallon size trees. Depending on selection, a 24" box tree can be as tall as 12 feet at the time of installation. The immediate impact would be to help screen the first floor of the house. He requested a modification to condition #5.

Debbie Chen, 25545 O'Keefe Lane, voiced concern with the trees which will block their view at maturity. Coastal Oaks can grow to 70 feet in height. The maximum height should be between 12 feet and 20 feet. She agreed with the use of shrubs as long as they will grow to at least 12 feet in height.

Dean Au stated he could maintain the trees to 20 feet. It was difficult to find trees that would only grow 20 feet. at maturity. He would be happy to plant shrubs that will grow to 12-20 feet.

Alan Chen, 25545 O'Keefe Lane, noted two concerns: (1) privacy; and (2) protecting their view. He would like to speak to the landscape person and help select the plantings. His preference would be for evergreen trees rather than shrubs, if possible.

CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Clow felt the request for 25 foot to 35 foot trees was unreasonable (benefits versus costs). The house is visible. He agreed with the request for something more than 12 feet. He can support the compromise between Au and Chen regarding shrubbery or trees. Commissioner Kerns did not agree with the trees along the north side as he felt the 24" box would be fine. He felt sometimes smaller oaks grow faster because larger trees become root bound. They could add a condition that would be a compromise stating that shrubs or trees would be planted on the east side that would grow to maturity at the 12 foot to 20 foot range. Commissioner Cottrell and Commissioner Wong agreed. Chairman Vitu also agreed.

MOTION SECONDED AND PASSED: Motion by Commissioner Kerns and seconded by Commissioner Cottrell to approve the request for a Site Development Permit for a landscape screening plan, and modification to new residence condition of approval , #5, Lands of Au, 12870 Robleda Road, with the following additions/changes to the conditions of approval: The applicant shall install either trees or shrubbery along the eastern property line with a minimum height of 12 feet and at maximum height at maturity of 20 feet to provide screening and view protection for the easterly neighbor.

AYES: Chairman Vitu, Commissioners Wong, Clow, Cottrell & Kerns
NOES: None

This item is subject to a 23 day appeal period.

4. OLD BUSINESS

4.1 Report from subcommittees-none

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Recording meetings reviewed by the Planning Director.

5.2 Planning Commission schedule for February

PASSED BY CONSENSUS: To change the regular scheduled meeting from February 13 to February 27, 2003.

6. REPORT FROM THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

6.1 Planning Commission Representative for December 19th, Commissioner Cottrell, reported on the following items: concept of a plan for beginning the under grounding of existing utility wires in the Town; interviews of prospective candidates for the "new Town Hall Committee"; Open Space and Public Recreation Initiative; (Pathways Map, Resolution #1-3-02; California Building Standards Code; and Lands of Campbell and Ligeti.

6.2 Planning Commission Representative for January 2nd -cancelled

6.3 Planning Commission Representative for January 16th -Commissioner Wong

6.4 Planning Commission Representative for February 6th -Commissioner Vitu

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

7.1 Approval of December 12, 2002 minutes

APPROVED BY CONSENSUS: To approve the December 12, 2002 minutes.

8. REPORT FOR FAST TRACK SITE DEVELOPMENT MEETING OF DECEMBER 17 & 31, 2002 & JANUARY 7, 2003

- 8.1 LANDS OF KHOSRANI, 25698 Elena Road (215-02-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for an addition and major remodel. Approved with conditions.
- 8.2 LANDS OF ASKARI, 27830 Elena Road (Parcel A) (187-02-ZP-SD-GD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a new residence. Approved with conditions.
- 8.3 LANDS OF PICA, 12000 Kate Drive (248-02-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a basement. Approved with conditions.

9. REPORT FROM SITE DEVELOPMENT MEETING- DECEMBER 17 & 31 AND JANUARY 7, 2003

- 9.1 LANDS OF WESTRA, 10574 Blandor Way (237-02-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a landscape screening plan. Approved with conditions.
- 9.2 LANDS OF YANG, 13481 Mandoli Drive (233-02-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a landscape screening plan. Approved with conditions.
- 9.3 LANDS OF QUAIL MEADOWS, 26122 Duval Way (168-02-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a landscape screening plan. Continued to January 14, 2003.
- 9.4 LANDS OF PARVARANDEH, 27210 Ohlone Lane (153-02-ZP-SD); A request for a Site Development Permit for a swimming pool. Continued to January 21, 2003.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lani Smith
Planning Secretary